(c) whether the Government propose to being uniformity in the retirement age; and

(d) if so, the steps taken so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) to (d) All Class-I officers appointed on or after 1.9.1956, i. e. the date of nationalisations of the life insurance business, retire at the age of 58. However, the Class-I officers of the erstwhile companies who were inducted into the LIC after their nationalisation including those who became officers after nationalisation, have been treated as a district group and their retirement age has been kept at 60 years as per terms of their employment at the time of their joining the service. There is thus uniformity in the retirement age in each of these two groups, and there is no proposal under consideration to change the pattern of the retirement age for the Class-I officers of the LIC.

Import of Synthtic Thread

6879. SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of synthetic thread imported during the last three years;

(b) the amount of foreign exchange spent thereon;

(c) whether the Government propose to import synthetic threads in future also; and

(d) if so, the reasons thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) to (d). In terms of the Export and Import Policy, 1992-97, import of synthetic thread like all other itmes, is not covered by the Negative List, and is freely allowed. This has been done in order to ensure easy availability of imported raw materials, with a view to improving the quality of Indian products and making them internationally more competitive.

Statistical date in respect of import of various items for the period 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91 is constrained in the Monthly Statistics of Foreign Trade of India, Vol. II-Imports, published by the Director General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library.

Trade with Spain

6880. SHEI ANKUSHRAO RAOSAHED TOPE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Business Mission from Spain has shown its willingness to increase trade with India in view of the recent economic liberalisation policy introduced by the the Union Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) to (c). A Spanish Delegation had visited India in November, 1991 and had meeting with apex Industry Associations in Delhi and Bombay. Possibilities for Joint Ventures and technology transfer in areas such a food products, electrical appliances and automobile components besides, export of granite, marble and cement trom India to Spain were envisaged during these interactions.

Government endeavours to promote commercial and industrial cooperation

through pr-omotion measures such as participation in fairs, exhibitions and market surveys.

Re-Imbursement of Surgery Expenses to Defence Pensioners

6881. SHRI DHARMANNA MONDAYYA SADUL: Will the Minister DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken any decision to re-imburse or to provide financial assistance to defence pensioners to meet the high cost surgery expenses by them and their spouses; and

(b) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) and (b). There is no scheme in Ministry of Defence for financial assistance to meet the high cost of surgery expenses of Defence pensioners of their spouses. However, Army Group Insurance Fund (AGIF), a Society registered under the Society Registration Act, has introduced a contributory, self-sustaining Medical Benefit Scheme to provide financial assistance upto an amount of Rs. 1 lakh for Members and their sponses to meet the cost of surgery/ treatment of certain cases of heart ailment, cancer and renal transplant. Only those personnel who have retired with service pension and have not completed a period of 15 years after retirement or 70 years of age, whichever is earlier, are eligible to opt for this scheme. The treatment has to be taken in the approved hospitals. A scheme on similar lines is in operation on the Air Force side also.

Non-Observance of Customs Rules

6882. DR. R. MALLU:
SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT:

Will the Minister of FINANCE pleased to state:

(a) the total number of cases of deliberate non-observance of customs rules and regulations during each of the last three years on each port and airport in the country alongwith the value of goods confiscated;

(b) the amount involved therein, year-wise;

(c) the number of persons apprehended in this regard, year-wise; and

(d) the amount of penalty recovered from these persons, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) to (d). The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Deemed Exporter Companies

6883. SHRI CHHOTEY SINGH YADAV: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that many deemed exporter companies are facing difficulties due to lack of funds;

(b) whether the Reserve Bank of India has instructed the Nationalised Banks to be lenient with such deemed exporter-companies while providing funds;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) No, Sir. Such issues are normally referred by the exporters to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and RBI have indicated that no complaints to this effect have been received by them.